



# Expressions of Unity

# April

2026

## STEP 4

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Spiritual Principle: **Courage**

## TRADITION 4

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or OA as a whole.

Spiritual Principle: **Autonomy**

## PROMISE 4

We will know peace.

## *Monthly Reminders*

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Share your experience, strength, and hope any month!

Send submissions by the 27<sup>th</sup> for the next month's newsletter to [unity.intergroup.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:unity.intergroup.newsletter@gmail.com)

### MONTHLY INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING (ZOOM)

All are welcome!

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month  
12:30-2:30

ID: 810 4426 4132

Passcode: 12345

Phone: +13126266799

Passcode:12345

# EVENTS

SPRING TWO-PART  
QUICK STEPS  
WORKSHOP (ZOOM)

SATURDAY, MAY 2 & 16,

REGISTRATION  
COMING SOON!



SCAN TO  
SEE EVENTS  
HOSTED ALL  
OVER THE  
WORLD

REGION 5 CONVENTION  
SEPTEMBER 4TH-6TH 2026  
SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS

Think back to the last in-person convention you attended. If you are like me, you left feeling inspired, connected and filled up with recovery. Unity Intergroup is part of Region 5 which serves about a dozen midwestern states. Every year, Region 5 holds a convention hosted by one of the intergroups. In

2025, the Region 5 convention was in Milwaukee. In 2026 it will be in Indianapolis Sept. 4 - 6. Unity Intergroup has an opportunity to host the Region 5 convention in 2027 or 2028 at a date and location of our choosing.

The hosting intergroup takes the lead on organizing the convention with support and participation from the Region 5 board and other intergroups.

Intergroups that have recently hosted a convention are willing to provide mentoring and support. This is an opportunity to connect with fellows from around the region, hear from region speakers, and share hope and recovery.

If you feel inspired to help organize a Region 5 convention in 2027 or 2028, we want to hear from you! At the April 11<sup>th</sup> Unity Intergroup meeting, we will be voting on whether or not to host a Region 5 Convention. If you are interested or want to learn more, call Liz Z at 651-206-5774.



Sponsored by:  
**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**

**REGION 5**  
Serving areas in IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, MO, ND, OH & WI

# REGION 5 2026 CONVENTION

September 4-6, 2026

All activities and accommodations are at the Crowne Plaza Hotel by the Indianapolis Airport  
2501 S High School Rd,  
Indianapolis, IN 46241

## GENERAL EVENT PROGRAM:

- Keynote speakers modeling lives of recovery
- Levels of service panels
- Opportunities to find a sponsor
- Writing tools workshops
- Live meetings throughout ALL of the convention
- Recovery-centered crafts
- Adapting a food plan to life's changes workshops

## FLUTTER INTO THE 12 FREEDOMS!

-From July 23, *Voices of Recovery*;  
reprinted with permission

Region 5 Fundraisers:  
Marketplace,  
Gift Basket Raffles  
50/50 raffle

### Pricing:

Friday Pre-Convention Workshop (includes lunch) \$65

Early-bird Pricing (register before August 1st) \$155

Regular Pricing (on or after August 1st) \$180

Walk-in Pricing (No meals included) \$105

Optional Breakfast Add-On \$20 per breakfast (+gratuity and taxes)

Hotel (Group rate ends \$109 per night + taxes and fees on August 1st)

Price includes lunch and dinner on Saturday

### To Register:

Keep an eye out for registration information at:  
[www.region5oa.org](http://www.region5oa.org)

Be sure to register before August 1<sup>st</sup> to lock in Early-Bird Rates!

Hosted by:

**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**  
Midwest Crossroads Intergroup

Step Four asks me to take a real, honest look at myself: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." For me, that just means sitting down and writing out what's really going on—my resentments, my fears, and the ways I've acted that I'm not proud of. It can feel uncomfortable, but I've learned it doesn't have to be perfect. I just have to be willing to be honest. This isn't a step meant to make me feel shame; instead, it's meant to help me see both my flaws and my strengths.

As I go through it, I start to notice patterns—times where fear or control shows up in my actions. Instead of blaming other people or beating myself up, I try to simply see my part in things. That's not always easy, but it helps me understand myself better. Writing it all out takes some of the weight off and helps me see things more clearly.

For me, Step Four is really about being honest so I can move forward. It helps set me up for the next steps and makes it easier to let go of things I've been holding onto. It helps me see the patterns and behaviors that had me returning to compulsive overeating time and time again. It helps me realize that the problem wasn't the food—it was all the underlying stuff that made me want to escape into it. It's not about being perfect—it's about being real, and that's where change starts.

-A.M.



The AA 12x12 begins its discussion of Step 4 with an exploration of the role of instincts in human beings. It describes that instincts are natural and crucial for the survival of humanity. However, the instincts of an addict are not doing their job. My instinct to eat has derailed and it manifests as overpowering cravings. Before becoming abstinent in OA, these cravings arose when I felt an emotion that I could not manage - which was pretty much all emotions. My instinct to feel safe and welcomed was intertwined with my instinct to eat. Before OA, I thought that it was "normal" to have these cravings and that "normal" people had the willpower to say no to the cravings. I thought that I was weaker-willed than thin people. What I learned is that my cravings were not normal, and that people who did not struggle with food addiction did not experience those cravings. Wanting a sweet treat and saying no to it was an entirely different experience for a normal eater than it was for me. I learned that I am not weak, I am strong. But, I am different. I have a disease that uses my instincts to survive against me. And, for reasons that I do not understand, the Steps, tools, and Traditions have lifted the cravings. I no longer believe that overeating will fill a void or solve a problem or make me somehow feel better. This is a miracle. I don't know why this program works for me, but it sure does. One day at a time.

-Anonymous

## SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF STEP/TRADITION 4

### Step 4 → Spiritual Principle: **COURAGE** (OA 12x12, p. 25)

When I had only three months of abstinence in Overeaters Anonymous, I attended a potluck for my home group in another fellowship. I had been attending this particular group every week for two or three years, so the regulars knew me when I was at my bottom with compulsive overeating. At my bottom, I was deeply unhappy, spiritually bankrupt, ashamed of my body, and twenty pounds heavier.


This particular evening, a fellow pulled me aside and said "something is different about you recently... are you doing hardcore things?" I laughed a little and replied "I'm not doing hardcore things like CrossFit, if that's what you mean." Then I thought about it for a second and told him "actually, I think I have been doing hardcore things... Three months ago, I turned my food addiction over to my Higher Power. I follow a food plan from a licensed nutritionist. I commit my food to my sponsor every morning, and then I weigh all of my portions according to what I committed that day. I also use several other tools of the program which seemed pretty hardcore at my first OA meeting (daily hookup calls, writing, etc). Last month, for the first time in about eight years, I even mustered the courage to put on a swimsuit and wear it among other people. I attend water aerobics classes three times each week, and those older ladies really kick my butt! Tonight, here at this potluck, I'm surrounded by over a hundred people who are eating food that is definitely not abstinent for me, and I'm completely satisfied with the dinner that I brought for myself. I'm also thinking about how I can be of service instead of which food I can sneak next. It took a tremendous amount of courage for me to start addressing my food addiction and then to keep following program guidelines for abstinence one day at a time for the past three months, so I guess I have been doing hardcore things!"

### Tradition 4 → Spiritual Principle: **AUTONOMY** (OA 12x12, p. 113)

In the OA program, autonomy means that my OA home group can make decisions about our meeting that might be different from other meetings, as long as we don't affect other groups or OA as a whole. For example, we chose to end our meeting with the "Just For Today" reading following by the OA Promise. Other meetings end with different readings or prayers. Each group gets to decide for themselves, based on the Group Conscience. And we get to change our mind too!


When I think about applying the spiritual principle of autonomy to my relationships, I first think about my brother. He and I have vastly different political views. Sometimes I even wonder how, out of everyone in the entire universe, my brother is the one person whose DNA most closely matches my own and yet we have such polar opposite perspectives on politics. Autonomy means that he gets to have his own opinions and I get to have my own opinions... and we each get to change our minds too! In my relationship with my brother, my primary purpose is to be his sister. Politics is an outside issue.





Another example of autonomy in relationships... after several years of abstinence, I decided that I loved water aerobics so much that I wanted to start teaching classes of my own. I learned a lot from other instructors and, because each fitness instructor is autonomous except in matters that affect other classes or the fitness center as a whole, I get to choose many aspects about my classes that might be different from how other instructors teach their classes. I tend to use more modern music. I prefer intervals training instead of steady-state cardio. Some of my classes can be more challenging I tell people "I'll kick your butt if that's what you're looking for (or not... it's up to you)!" I get to choose the entire choreography and music according to my own opinions and preferences, and other instructors get to choose for themselves too. And the students get to choose what's best for each of them, or they can choose a variety by attending classes with different instructors. Autonomy means that everyone gets to choose for themselves.

Love & service,  
Johni B  
OA HOW Joy of Recovery



**"Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups, or OA as a whole"**


Tradition Four gives our meeting freedom to meet local needs while staying aligned with OA. Here's how the new Joy of Recovery OA HOW Meeting practiced this balance.

The Joy of Recovery OA HOW meeting\* officially "started" on August 6th, 2025. The intention was to create a mid-week evening HOW-format meeting that was located centrally in the Twin Cities.

An exploratory survey and six "pre-meeting" group conscience meetings occurred through June and July - with any OA members who were interested in contributing support to this new meeting.

We started nuanced decisions regarding the format, which readings to do, and registration with OA World Service and Unity Intergroup became. In discussing these topics, we came to acknowledge ourselves as a part of the greater whole of OA, and yet responsible to determine what was needed for our own meeting.

Each member who contributed had experienced many different OA meetings, and much of the conversation centered on what other meetings had done that had made a meaningful difference in the recovery of the members now gathered. We discussed the basic requirements of OA meetings, outlined on the OA World Service website, what it meant to follow the "HOW" format, and where the group had flexibility to do something different.



Through all the decisions that were made we learned important lessons from other meetings, following closely the suggested meeting format, and making a commitment to use only OA-approved literature (current editions). This kept us following along with the greater OA family and helped solidify for us that yes, we are an OA group. It became apparent that many groups had blessed our group and out of respect for those other groups, we put together a meeting that seemed to have been flavored and inspired by the heart and soul of the groups we founders came from and we endeavored to respect that gift as we started off on our own.

I am grateful for the meetings that supported us, and I am grateful those meetings are still there. There are so many different types of meetings, and because we have the autonomy of this tradition, this allows us to also have diversity, with members of our fellowship and with the meetings in our fellowship. One specific format of an OA meeting may not be what a particular newcomer needs. Our support of other meetings, and not comparing ourselves either positively or negatively, gives us humility and the ability to allow a newcomer to find another format, day, time or location that suits them best. That is the purpose of our fellowship, after all, and we are all here, in our diversity, to greet the newcomer and offer a solution.

Practicing this tradition means that I am respecting that group conscience is the authority, not any member of our group (including me!). This means asking earnestly that Higher Power's will be done throughout any group conscience process, no matter what my pre-conceived notion was. Honesty, open-mindedness and willingness have led to strong bonds and support within our fledgling group, regardless of the outcome, and gave us a firm foundation for our meeting. When I am feeling like I am not in accord with the rest of the group members, I can take a look to see how closely I am following this tradition. A quick reapplication helps me reconnect and it is as simple as asking Higher Power for help.

I also am holding closely the responsibility for my new home meeting. While there are many other meetings to go to, meetings can and do fold if those who attend do not commit service (time, treasure, or talent) to those meetings. That may ultimately be Higher Power's will, but if I find myself concerned about the prospect, perhaps I can contribute financially, put some chairs away, or offer to do a reading, just in case my concern is meant to prompt my service - and that is Higher Power's will instead.


In Step Four, I took a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself, trying to put aside any frustrations or unrealistic expectations of how other people should have been in my past and looking for my part. With Tradition Four, I'm invited to do the same and ask myself - am I showing up for my meeting with an open heart, respecting the meeting's unique perspective, while also respecting OA as whole and supporting our primary purpose - to be there for the newcomer?

Do I get bogged down in wishing the meeting could go differently (my will be done)? As part of my program is to refrain from negative thinking (a favorite snack of my disease that could easily lead to "the food"! ). This Tradition invites me to rise to the challenge of getting to the bottom of my own ego and surrendering. Autonomy does not mean I can do whatever I want, it means I take responsibility for myself and consider how my behaviors affect others in my environment - I can do this personally and as part of the group conscience process.

~Chrissy M

\*The Joy of Recovery OA-HOW Meeting meets on Wednesdays from 6-8 PM at Valley Community Presbyterian Church in Golden Valley.





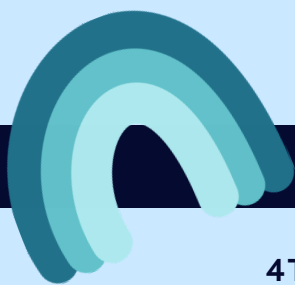
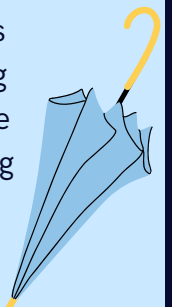
## The Gift of Step Four

The first time I embarked on my "searching and fearless moral inventory" was incredibly daunting. I've done several Fourth and Fifth Steps over the years, and it still can be daunting. At the beginning of my recovery journey from compulsive eating, I especially didn't want to unearth all of my defects of character that I knew had been lying dormant for the years my disease was active. But my sponsor at the time lovingly reminded me that the first three Steps had prepared me for this, and the rest of the Steps. I had agreed, through Step Three, to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood God. My sustained abstinence from my food addiction depended on it. As we do, I connected with my fellows (lots of fellows), who had been through the process and I was again reminded that we don't do any of this alone. My reliance on my finite self began to be replaced by a deeper reliance on my Higher Power. I remembered how desperate I was when I first came into the rooms of OA and that I promised myself I was prepared to do anything to not go back to where I was. So, onward; Fourth Step inventory it was!

In the Twelve Steps and Twelve traditions of Overeaters Anonymous (2nd ed.), the spiritual principle that goes with Step Four is courage. I pray for courage many times a day, by doing the Serenity prayer (and other prayers). I did a lot of that when I did my first inventory. I also prayed for the stamina to be as thorough as I possibly could. Because of that, I was able to review the myriad ways that "self-centeredness, anger, resentment, fear, pride, dishonesty, and negative thinking" - and the beliefs and attitudes at their root - showed up for me in particular. I resonate with this reminder from the OA 12 and 12: "Writing our Step Four inventory has enabled us to begin cleaning up the messes of the past so we can start life over, afresh. The self-analysis we do in Step Four is essential to our recovery from compulsive eating." As my sponsor reminded me, an important part of my inventory is also to list the strengths and gifts my Higher Power has provided to me.

We don't just sit with the inventory once we've completed it, after naming all of our resentments and fears and deepest of our defects. We then get to give it all away in Step Five, to another human being and God. What a cleansing experience that was (and still is every time I've completed my Fifth Step). It's like a deep spiritual spring cleaning for the soul. The tremendous gift of finding the courage in Step Four to be completely honest and forthright about my defects of character, and then in turning them over, is great peace and great gratitude.

-Donna S



## 4TH STEP PRAYERS FROM "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS"

"This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (p. 67)

"Help me to show those I resent the same Tolerance, Pity and Patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument." (P. 68)